

Anaximander Burgess Tutton

MsSC 146

Biography:

Anaximander B. Tutton was born in Illinois, 4 December 1843. He died 5 October 1910 in Tacoma, Washington.

Scope and Contents:

The papers consist of letters written by Anaximander Burgess Tutton (A.B. Tutton) to his wife, Ada and daughter, Bel when he was away from them for extended periods of time. From March 25, 1890 to May 27, 1890, A.B. Tutton wrote letters describing his trip to Tacoma from Sioux Falls and settlement in Tacoma. In these letters, he chronicled the scenery of his train trip, the selection of Tacoma as their new home, his attempt to start a bank, the weather in the area, the city of Tacoma, and his interaction with different people in Tacoma especially Mrs. White from the Annie Wright Seminary. Also included was a letter to his family while he was going to Washington D.C. for an invention patent.

The next set of letters pertain to Tutton's mining claim, Birch Creek Placer Claim in Nez Perce County Idaho. From July 27, 1894 to June 25, 1896, he wrote letters to his family in Tacoma describing his daily activities, mining operations, the weather, and his animals. Included in the letters are camp diaries that he copied onto the reverse side of certain letters.

Later correspondence referred to his duties with the Pacific Navigation Company and his daughter's millinery in Tacoma.

Dates: 25 March 1890 - 30 August 1899

Restrictions: none

Volume: .5 linear feet

Accession number: 2000.23.1

Letters:

Folder:

1 Letters: 25 March 1890 - 31 March 1890.

Journey to Tacoma from Sioux Falls. Near Bismarck, North Dakota the train was too heavy and Northern Pacific split the train into two sections with the mail in the front and Tutton in the second half. He suffered from severe rheumatism which cleared in the 'badlands' of South Dakota. Arrived in Spokane Falls with a 'dumpish cold and sore throat.' He loved Spokane Falls but wanted to wait to make a judgment on where they will live. Arrived in Tacoma calling it, 'Omaha, on a very large scale.'

2 Letters: 1 April 1890 - 30 April 1890.

Activities in Tacoma and Seattle. Met friends from Omaha in Tacoma. Sailed to Seattle through the Puget Sound. Describes difficulty in selecting a location for their new home after visiting Seattle, saying Tacoma was 'suggestive of Boston,' in that it was not like the typical western town. Described a family acquaintance as a 'spiteful, hateful, bragging, and sassity' woman.

Chose Tacoma as their new home. Describes the surrounding forest and mentions that 'Two hundred years cannot show any appreciable devastation of the timber of this country.' Tells Bel to send an

application to Annie Wright Seminary for teachers are scarce in the area. Selects a site at Pacific and Jefferson for his bank, State Savings Bank.

Also of note, April 8, 1890 was the 28th anniversary of his wound received at Shiloh.

3 Letters: 1 May 1890 - 27 May 1890.

Selects business furniture. Complains about receiving no letter. Some couples were stuck on a sandbar in Commencement Bay. Writes about his invention and the wait for a patent. Uneasy about his wife's health.

Expresses frustration at Mrs. White from the Annie Wright Seminary for her treatment of Bel's application. Described Annie Wright (the person) and her father, Charles Wright. Mentions the founding of Puget Sound University and his desire for Bel to be employed there.

On May 27, 1890, Tutton writes from Chicago on his way to Washington D.C. for his invention patent, reminding his wife to say they are from Tacoma not Sioux Falls when the census takers came.

4 Letters: 27 July 1894.

Notice of Vacation for Birch Creek Placer Claim.

5 Letters: 28 December 1894 - 5 January 1895.

Folder includes the Pre-emptive Right of Way and Location of water for Birch Creek, warranty deed, and the land deed for Birch Creek. Describes the placer mines as being 'a bonanza.'

6 Letters: 30 April 1895 - 21 May 1895.

Cloudburst destroys the reservoir and dam. Needs money, the mine is not paying off. He is getting the blues.

7 Letters: 5 September 1895 - 3 October 1895.

Document giving A.B. Tutton legal authority over his daughter's claim on Birch Creek. During this time, he traveled from Tacoma to Asotin via Spokane and Uniontown. Burglary at Uniontown depot but his cargo unharmed. Warns his family about long intervals between letters. Description of John Burke, his workman and tent mate. A request for duplicate letters to be sent to Waha and Keuterville. Crosses Craig Mountain.

8 Letters: 6 October 1895 - 3 November 1895.

Camp diaries October 8-13, 1895, October 14-20, 1895, October 21-27, 1895, and October 28 - November 3, 1895. Describes the house and Mount Hope, the mound on which he placed the house. Complains about not receiving any letters. Receives a kitten and names her 'Patti.' Describes 'Toodles', his dog and constant companion. Writes about the drought and winter protection of the area.

9 Letters: 3 November 1895 - 1 December 1895.

Camp diaries November 4-10, 1895, November 11-17, 1895, November 18-24, 1895, and November 25-30, 1895. Writes about the necessity of living alone during the winter. A sheep herder needed his help to remove his remaining living sheep from the pile of trampled sheep and the smell of the sheep for days afterward. Three hundred sheep died and the herder was removed from his post.

10 Letters: 2 December 1895 - 4 January 1896.

Camp diaries December 2-8, 1895, December 9-15, 1895, December 16-22, 1895, December 23-30, 1895, and December 30 - January 4, 1896. Proposes a visit for the women after the busy season. Realizes he forgot it was Christmas. Describes the Vaughns' visit to his home. Complains about no mail or packages.

11 Letters: 5 January 1896 - 29 January 1896.

Suspends the diary due to a lack of paper. Camp diary January 5-15, 1896 and January 16-28, 1896. Held a discussion on war with his daughter. Describes his animals and their traits. Talks about the proposed visit. Rheumatism set in again.

12 Letters: 3 February 1896 - 23 February 1896.

Camp diary January 29 - February 17, 1896. Describes his visit to his neighbors the Vaughns'. Complains about his rheumatism. Declares he 'never in his life desired to achieve a result as much as to accomplish making money here.'

13 Letters: 1 March 1896 - 22 March 1896.

Camp diaries February 17 - March 8, 1896, March 1 - 15, 1896, and March 16 - 22, 1896. Complains a workman was the best ever, but ate too much. Works on clearing a road to the claim. Uses hydraulic mining. Feels as if he was making money.

14 Letters: 5 April 1896 - 26 April 1896.

Cancels proposed outing due to lack of money from the mine. Discovery of two rich spots in the mine. Describes the failure of the mine as due to 'the misfortune of two feeble old arms.' Stops copying the camp diary.

15 Letters: 11 May 1896 - 25 May 1896.

Warns family not to expect letters while he is busy mining. Formula for Sea Foam for his daughter. Asks for clothing for his debut back into civilization. Glad to receive mail from the family.

16 Letters: 1 June 1896 - 25 June 1896.

Homesick. Mine failure. Looks forward to coming home but with 'regrets and almost pain that comes home empty-handed.'

Undated letters describe how boxes were set properly and how the other bars have found gold but not his.

Deeds of labor or land improvement are official documents proving the claim of A.B. for Birch Creek.

17 Letters: Birch Creek Placer Claim Transcribed by Christian Miller.

Transcription of Tutton's letters and camp diaries with Miller's editorial comments.

18 Letters: 20 December 1897.

Letter to A.B. from M. Ashton, president of Pacific Navigation Company concerning his ability to fulfill his auditor duties.

19 Letters: 28 August 1899 - 30 August 1899.

Three letters to his wife and daughter describing his daughter's millinery store in Tacoma and the items being sold. A.B. said 'trade is dull' due to a torn up street.

Note: His wife and daughter were out of town in an unknown location. Also, the store was located in the Chamber of Commerce building.